

from **ELENA** (pages 36–49)

Problem and Solution

The characters in stories face problems. As the stories unfold, problems continue to arise and characters must figure out how to solve them.

Fill in the following problem/solution chart based on the excerpt from *Elena*. Tell how each problem was solved.

Problem	Solution
1. Father's horse falls into a deep ravine.	Men _____ _____ _____
2. Elena is worried that Pancho Villa's men will take Esteban.	Mother _____ _____ _____
3. Elena is afraid that Pancho Villa's men will steal the family's horses.	She _____ _____ _____
4. Elena is worried that the soldiers at the border will give Esteban trouble.	Esteban crosses the border by _____ _____ _____
5. The family can't find Trinidad, but it still needs to find a place to live in the United States. San Francisco is too damp and cold, and Los Angeles is too big.	The family _____ _____ _____
6. The family needs money.	Esteban _____ _____ Elena _____ _____

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Characterization

Characters are the people who take part in the action of a story. **Characterization** is the way a writer makes a character come alive by describing what he or she does, says, and thinks. The writer also tells what others say or think about the character.

Read the passages about Elena. Then circle the phrase that correctly completes the sentence that follows each passage.

1. Elena goes crazy with grief when Pablo dies. She cries, knocks down her flowers, and lets all the birds in the cages free.

Elena is a person who shows her feelings.
hides her feelings.

2. When Pancho Villa comes, Elena understands that all that she has gone through has made her strong and determined. She gathers her children around her.

Elena is a person who goes to pieces in an emergency.
can be counted on in an emergency.

3. Elena is afraid that Pancho Villa's men will take her horses. She brings the horses into the kitchen to hide them.

Elena is a person who does whatever needs to be done.
is never willing to do something unusual.

4. Neighbors urge Elena not to travel because it is too dangerous. She says that the world is changing and goes away with her family anyway.

Elena is a person who follows other people's advice.
thinks for herself.

5. Elena gives away everything in her shop to people who need it.

Elena is a person who is kind and giving.
is greedy.

- 6.** Elena runs a boardinghouse—a hard job that takes a great deal of work.

Elena is a person who complains when work is hard.
is happy to work hard for her family.

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Foreign Words

Sometimes, as you read, you will come upon a word from a foreign language. Use context clues to figure out its meaning.

A. Read each sentence below. Use context clues to figure out the meaning of the word in boldface, or darker, type. Circle its meaning in the choices below the sentence.

1. Pancho Villa took off his hat and put on one of Father's beautiful, silver-trimmed **sombreros**.
a. horses b. hats c. boots
2. After Pablo died, Elena lost some of her **chispa**; that is, she became more serious.
a. memories b. money c. bright spark
3. We asked about our cousin Trinidad on every street in the **barrio** for weeks.
a. restaurant b. neighborhood c. library
4. Elena took down bolts of **manta** from the shelves and gave them away to people who needed new coats.
a. heavy cloth b. string c. furniture
5. Elena fried **tortillas**, flat circles of ground corn, for the boarders.
a. corn designs b. cakes c. pancake-like bread

B. Read the meanings of the adopted foreign words below. Write one of the words to complete each sentence.

bandoleer: from *Spanish* bandolera; a wide belt filled with bullets, worn over one shoulder and across the chest

bouquet: from *French*; a bunch of cut flowers

kung fu: from *Chinese*; a system of self-defense

serape: from *Spanish*; a wool blanket, often brightly colored, used as outer clothing or as a cloak

1. Gina gave her mother a _____ of roses for her birthday.
2. The stranger was dressed in a worn-looking _____ that barely covered his thin shoulders.
3. Steve practices _____ in front of the mirror every day.
4. The soldier wore a _____ to carry enough bullets for his rifles.

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Words to Know

notorious condolences detain refugees barrio

A. Complete each word puzzle with the correct word from the **Words to Know**.

1. Shirley went to a funeral and offered this to the family. _____
2. What do you call a Spanish-speaking neighborhood in the U.S.? _____
3. This word might describe a famous thief. _____
4. This is what you do when you keep someone in prison. _____
5. A person who is well-known for bad deeds is this. _____
6. What is another word for people who flee their country to find safety? _____
7. A car accident can do this to you if you are in a hurry. _____
8. This is an expression of sympathy. _____
9. This word describes people who need protection during war. _____
10. Bandits and pirates have this kind of reputation. _____

B. Use the boxed letters to fill in the blanks below.

Elena and her family lived in this California city for a short time before they moved to Santa Ana.
